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Org 1 Scientology

Scientologists Lose in London Extradition Ruling

LONDON (AP)—The Church of Scientology lost a London court battle Friday to prevent two of its members from being extradited to the United States on charges of counseling and procuring burglary of American government offices.

But the church immediately announced an appeal to the Divisional Court in London and said that if necessary it would pursue the appeal through the House of Lords and the European Court, which has jurisdiction because of Britain's membership in the European Economic Community.

Magistrate William Robbins, after a nine-day hearing, rejected the defense argument that the case is of a political nature ruling out extradition under British law.

Robbins held instead that U.S. authorities had established their case for extradition of Mrs. Jane Kember, 41, a Briton, and Morrison Budlong, 30, an American.

They are wanted for trial in Washington, along with other Scientologists, in connection with the removal of documents from Washington offices of the Justice Department and the Internal Revenue Service.

Attorneys for the U.S. government alleged that members of the sect, under instructions from Mrs. Kember and Budlong, infiltrated U.S. government departments and removed documents.

Counsel for the Scientologists did not deny the burglaries, but argued that the aim was to obtain official secrets of interest to the Church of Scientology and so was of a political nature and thus not an extraditable offense.

Throughout the hearing, there were references to claims that the CIA and other U.S. intelligence organizations were trying to infiltrate the Scientologists' organization.